

# FACT SHEET THE “CLALLAM/CLINE COMBO PROJECT” AND THE WATER CONSERVATION PLAN

---

## **What is the Clallam/Cline Combo Project, and why is it needed?**

Currently, the two main canals of Cline Irrigation District and Clallam Ditch Company have a shared outtake on the Dungeness River and cross one another four times over about 16,000 feet. The Clallam/Cline Combo Project, one of the projects recommended in the Water Users Association (WUA) Water Conservation Plan, will combine these two main canals into a single pipeline. The new pipeline will extend from the Dungeness River outtake to a point north of Carlsborg, a total length of approximately 18,000 feet. It will supply water to the entire area served by the Company and will carry water more efficiently to the Cline District. Over six cfs of water savings will result from the overall project, allowing more water to remain in the River for threatened Dungeness salmon. In addition, this project will reduce maintenance by both the District and the Company, conserve energy by reduced reliance on pumps, prevent pollution from entering the system, and generally allow the organizations to provide better customer/shareholder service.

## **What is the WUA Water Conservation Plan (Plan)?**

The WUA Water Conservation Plan (1999) was prepared to improve the facilities and operations of the WUA by achieving better efficiency of the irrigation system, reducing irrigation diversions from the Dungeness River and thereby increasing the amount of water left in the River. Preparation of the Plan included engineering work, extensive field mapping, compilation of flow data, groundwater analyses, a review of potential environmental impacts, and recommendations for system improvements. The recommendations include nonstructural projects (such as preparing a drought response plan) and structural projects (such as piping open ditches, constructing small reservoirs to eliminate tailwater, and combining or abandoning certain canals). The Clallam/Cline Combo Project is one of the many structural projects described in the Plan.

## **Did the Plan undergo agency review?**

The Plan went through the State’s environmental review process (SEPA) in 1999. It was determined that no significant impact from the Plan was likely, and the WUA began implementing recommended projects. In 2002, litigation by a property owner (who was concerned about projects within the area served by the Sequim-Prairie Tri Irrigation Association) resulted in a new determination that the potential existed for significant environmental impacts. The new determination required the development of an Environmental Impact Statement.

## **What are the findings of the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Water Conservation Plan?**

The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) describes the purpose of the Water Conservation Plan, the alternative actions for reducing Dungeness River diversions, the potential environmental impacts, and possible mitigation options for these impacts. Any of the impacts below (taken from the FEIS) refer to full implementation of the Plan (ALL recommended projects together), and not to implementation of the Clallam/Cline Combo Project by itself or any other single project recommended in the Plan.

**Effects of the Plan on water supplies:** Reduction in ground water recharge and aquifer levels may adversely impact water supplies, especially for shallow wells. This impact is *in addition to* the

ongoing impact of declining ground water levels caused by a combination of factors, including increased withdrawals from exempt and non-exempt water supplies. \* Note that ponds in the area may be cut off from their water supply. This is in line with WUA Rules and Regulations, which prohibit use of irrigation water for recreational or aesthetic ponds. Distribution of water is limited to “beneficial uses” (as defined by Ecology).

**Effects of the Plan on wetlands:** [A summary of effects on individual wetlands can be found in Table 5.4-3 of the FEIS]. Although a worst case analysis found the effect on any specific wetland may not be considered significant, the cumulative effect (considering all low/med impacts together) would likely result in a significant adverse impact to wetland functions. \* However, because the effect of reduced ditch leakage to the shallow aquifer cannot be isolated in the field from other effects (additional wells, changed land uses, and human alterations of wetlands); it is not possible to attribute loss of function only to the implementation of the Plan. Note that wetlands that are intentionally created, such as the irrigation ditches, are not subject to County regulation.

**Effects of the Plan on wildlife:** Implementation of the Plan would likely reduce wetland/riparian habitat, possibly displacing individuals of some freshwater wetland-dependent wildlife species. However, the farmland, bay, and estuary will continue to provide abundant habitat for nighttime roosting and feeding. Note that some trees and shrubs are routinely removed during regular system maintenance and would also be removed prior to pipelining.

**Mitigation (for reduced Dungeness flows) provided by the Water Conservation Plan:** The Plan was designed and proposed as a large mitigation plan for the ongoing adverse impacts of diverting water from the Dungeness River for irrigation. It produces very substantial environmental benefits for the Dungeness river aquatic system by restoring water to the river, most critically during low flows when salmon are most needful of the water. \* The FEIS concluded that these substantial benefits compensate for and offset the environmental impacts to artificially maintained wetlands, streams, and aquifers that have in the past received water from leakage and discharge associated with the irrigation system.

### **Did the Water Conservation Plan get approved?**

In 2003, the Department of Ecology approved the WUA Comprehensive Water Conservation Plan, declaring that the FEIS fulfilled SEPA requirements for the Plan (see letter from Ecology, dated 12/22/03). With the approval, projects recommended in the Water Conservation Plan can be submitted to Ecology for consideration for implementation funding.

### **Is the FEIS available for public viewing?**

You can get paper or electronic copies of the FEIS by contacting: Donna Nicholson, Shorelands and Environmental Assistance Program, Southwest Regional Office, Department of Ecology, P.O. Box 47775, Olympia, WA 98504-7775, 360-407-7058. You may also view a copy at one of the following locations: Port Angeles Library, Clallam County Courthouse, Sequim Library, Clallam Conservation District, Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe, and City of Sequim City Offices. The Summary (Chapter 1) and the Table of Contents can be found on Ecology's Web site:

[http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/AWSF/dwua\\_eis.html](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/AWSF/dwua_eis.html)